



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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MEXICO:**Election Results Delayed**

The government's drawn-out process of announcing the results of the presidential election on 6 July reflects ruling-party indecision on how publicly to present the final outcome and is likely to enhance opposition claims of fraud. [redacted]

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The federal electoral commission—controlled by the ruling party—failed to announce the preliminary results of the presidential contest as expected yesterday. The commission instead began to review the results of each congressional race, starting with tallies for the lower house of the legislature. According to press reports, the most recent commission figures give 52 percent of the vote to ruling-party candidate Salinas, 31 percent to leftist candidate Cardenas, and 17 percent to conservative party nominee Clouthier. [redacted]

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Meanwhile, the opposition continues to challenge any claims of ruling-party wins. Cardenas claimed victory this weekend, giving himself 39 percent of the vote. Clouthier mustered 75,000 supporters in Mexico City on Saturday to protest fraud, and his party carried out several acts of civil disobedience in the northern state of Chihuahua. Clouthier also has said he will call for a national referendum on 30 July if Salinas is declared the winner, and [redacted] Cardenas's followers may back such a call. [redacted]

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Comment: The delay in releasing the official results reflects the ruling party's indecision on how best to present the electoral outcome. The party is struggling with how to proportion any concessions to Cardenas and Clouthier in order to minimize opposition protests while avoiding a backlash from ruling-party stalwarts. By reviewing the legislative races first piecemeal and probably granting substantial opposition victories, the ruling party is hoping to defuse the opposition's zeal for contesting the presidency. [redacted]

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The ruling party risks playing into the hands of its opponents, however, by allowing them time to promote their claims of victory. The opposition can also point to the drawn-out review process as evidence that the ruling party is continuing to manipulate the results. The longer Cardenas and Clouthier have to hammer at the theme of fraud, the harder it will be for the ruling party to claim a legitimate victory for Salinas and contain further opposition demonstrations. [redacted]

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